MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR CLIENTS WITH MPD AND DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

Vol. I, No. 3 June 1989 ISSN1042-2277

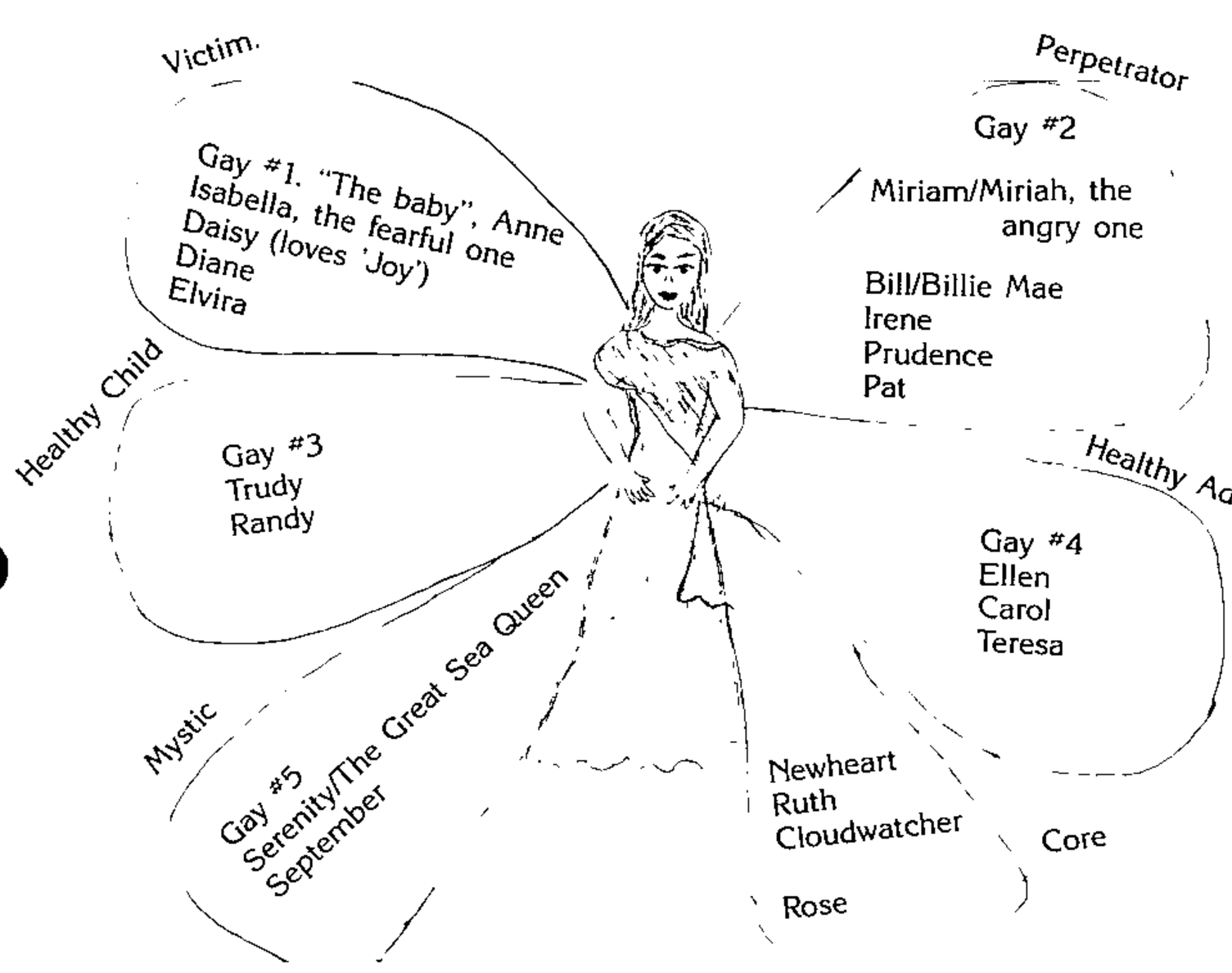
It's June? Already? Naaaah. Impossible!

(We're losing time again.) Anyhow, this issue is on communicating. We've got lots of wonderful stuff from ALL you wonderful contributors! THANKS to everyone, including those whose work we couldn't squeeze in.

Also: we need your ideas for 1990's theme issues and art. The new schedule will appear (I hope) in August. And PLEASE send humor and cartoons! Though most of our work is very serious, we all need a laugh now and then. Bless you, and enjoy! — LW.

Guardian Angel: knows, hears, and understands all of me.

Communicates to my Internal Self Helper.



How I Communicate with Myself

I have six primary personalities. Guardian has six wings. Each wing protects one of my personalities. On each wing are names of alters who are part of this personality. Guardian is Other — she is a power/spirit/angel/being

Guardian completely knows all of me. She communicates to my Internal Self Helper. Then my Internal Self Helper communicates to me.

Example: The victims wanted me (Rose) to know about the abuse which took place especially during the first eight years of our lives. "The baby" communicated this desire to Guardian. Guardian checked with my I.S.H., who agreed that Rose could now handle some of this information. Then Rose began to have auditory memories (baby crying, radio to cover sound of abuse,) and began to remember what the Victim personalities experienced.

Many Voices (ISSN1042-2277) is published bi-monthly at Cincinnati, Ohio Copyright © 1989 by MV Co All rights reserved. Editor/Publisher, Lynn W Mailing address for all subscriptions, manuscripts and correspondence is P.O. Box 2639, Cincinnati, OH 45201 2639. Subscriptions in U.S., $30 for one year Elsewhere, $36. This publication is designed to be an information exchange for MPD and Dissociative Disorders. Neither its editor nor its layperson contributors are engaged in the practice of medicine Persons with dissociative disorders should consult with competent professionals to approve all treatment strategies

Inner Communication

By Ann W.

Doesn't everyone talk to themselves in their heads? That is what I always thought. Hearing voices was normal. The voices in my head were just "thoughts", annoying at times because they would interfere with what I was trying to say, but otherwise, just "thoughts". At times I was convinced that I had a lost twin who was trying to talk to me through mental powers. The rest of the voices I wrote off as imaginary friends.

I am (we are) in my third year of therapy under the correct diagnosis. The first year with my therapist was spent telling her that I did not have multiple personalities. I was just "crazy". When she would ask questions that I should have been able to answer, or when I couldn't remember the previous session, I began to get frustrated. For so long I had been told that I was a schizo-affective and needed medication. I thought I would try to fool this therapist by keeping a journal. That way she couldn't catch me off guard with questions. I would study the previous session so I could keep my answers straight.

So I started a journal. I would write letters to my therapist during the times between appointments. For some unknown reason I had difficulty writing "Dear Journal" or "Dear Diary". The writing in itself seemed odd behavior because writing was always so frustrating to me.

When I would try to write any type of paper, note or letter, I would become very frustrated, for I couldn't seem to stay grammatically correct — especially when using personal pronouns. I would switch from "I" to "we" and not know why. I would wonder who I was writing about and get very confused. Sticking to one train of thought was very difficult.

Recently I've started to go over writings as far back as 1983. That was when I had my first experience in a psychiatric hospital. I was nineteen at the time and so afraid to talk. Instead of talking I would write down all the talking in my head.

My early journal entries read as if they are scripts for a play with different characters. Even back then, my alters were communicating. In my journal I wrote about voices in my head. Sometimes they were even yelling at someone for something they did wrong that day. This all went on inside without the knowledge of the hospital staff. My head would be filled with noise and I would be standing there with a nurse telling me "How quiet you are today!"

After fighting with my therapist about my diagnosis, I began to allow myself to look at what was happening in my journal. I found my penmanship to be drastically different; my style of writing and my attitude about things varied. I still resisted the label of MPD, yet I lessened the fighting with the therapy program and therapist.

Looking at my journal entries was a very emotional ordeal. Seeing the differences in the thought patterns, the grammar, the ideas, and even the memories, brought overwhelming feelings. At times I tried to deny it by saying "Someone else got ahold of my journal!" But who? I lived alone.

Even now when I reread a journal entry, I am shocked at what has been disclosed. This was the real beginning for me, in learning that others existed.

However, until I watched the movie "Sybil", about one year ago, I would still occasionally deny my disorder. When I saw the movie and the therapy stunts that Sybil pulled, I could no longer deny it. She pulled the same stunts that I had been trying.

It seems to have taken a long time for my system to communicate internally. Before we would talk and listen among ourselves, we went in search of information on MPD. What is it and exactly how rare is it? The fears, the questions, and the isolation of the disorder made us very hesitant to listen to each other and to our therapist.

But in the last six months, my system has opened up to communicating on a verbal level almost constantly among ourselves. We are "co-conscious" most of the time, although occasionally an alter will block the rest of us out and we will lose time.

At this writing, I have just been released from a psychiatric hospital, where I worked with a staff that is open and responsive to my disorder. (That in itself is a rare find.) We were admitted because my system is allowing our core personality, Ann, to start interacting with outsiders. She is too frightened to do this without a safe environment. We are also accepting at a gut level the emotional impact of our tormented childhood. We have acknowledged the incest and abuse for years on an intellectual level. This is our first attempt at allowing us to emotionally accept the pain, anger, hurt, and betrayal.

While in the hospital, our littlest one, Annie, started to have temper tantrums. The adults were concerned that if she threw one in public we would need to be restrained for everyone's safety. The adults called upon ISH (internal self-helper) for a "board meeting" to see how this could be handled. We partly knew that the fighting Annie was doing was a ghost from her past. She was still thinking that if she fought hard enough she could have not been hurt. The outcome of the meeting was to find a way for Annie to learn that fighting would have made no difference. Another positive result from the meeting for Annie was the

(continued on page 3)

(Communication *cont'd*)

acknowledgement that we all need to try to get our needs met without causing harm to another insider. Basically, we learned that we needed to have negotiations more often.

Annie was allowed to throw her temper tantrum in a controlled environment with the help of her therapist and the hospital. After a conference with the insiders, then the outsiders (doctors, therapists, and nursing staff) an agreed-upon abreactive session was done and Annie was allowed to scream and kick and fight until she was exhausted. This showed her that fighting wouldn't have made a difference for her. She was too small a victim. She has been given internal permission to cry and be angry, but she is not allowed to throw temper tantrums any more. This was all agreed during a conference with our adult insiders.

Our communication system moved from journal entries to verbal exchanges with our therapist to our present internal dialogues amongst ourselves. These were not easy transitions. When the verbal exchanges started amongst ourselves, it was very scary to stop and suddenly hear voices. Hearing the voices in my own head made me think I was going crazy. Also, they don't always agree and would have big arguments. I refer to them as "battles".

When the battles would start, I would become very suicidal and upset, because I hate yelling. Many times I would overdose trying to get them all to just shut up! Other times I would call my therapist and she would try to follow the battle, in hopes of neutralizing the war.

For a long time I thought things would never get better. With the help of my journal entries and a lot of thanks to a good and supportive therapist, we are still in the struggle with this tiring disorder. But now that we are communicating amongst ourselves, and are less afraid of each other, we have a chance of winning!

MV

NOTE: *The following 'open letter' was written to the members of a Parents United group who were uncomfortable having a "multiple" in their group. We thank Rita C. for sharing her explanation with us. —LW*

Don't be afraid of me — I'm *not sick*

You can't catch what I have. It's not contagious. It's not a disease.

I have been injured, wounded, and left to heal on my own or die from infection.

Those who abused me are the ones to be afraid of — those with disease (alcoholism) or addictions (drugs, sexual). Those people need treatment, medication, euthanasia.

If exposure to multiplicity frightens you or makes you uncomfortable, please just for a minute, imagine living it.

My alters aren't here to hurt YOU. They exist to protect ME.

Like a skilled surgeon sews the pieces of the physical body together to heal again and be whole, so does the therapist, knowledgeable and accepting of parts, "stitch" together those fragments of an individual who *for survival* have been living apart for many years.

Those people who are not aware of my multiplicity might assume that I have healed over enough to function on a day to day basis, yet have leftover aches and pains to deal with — much like a broken arm that heals, yet still aches when it rains. But it's more serious than that because the infection is still in my wound. It has never been cleaned out.

Once again, the therapist can help me. He can show me how to cleanse my wound, how to check it out for new infection or dirt that was missed the first time around.

And you, my friend, can help me with the bandages. When you wrap your arms around me in an appropriate, *sincere* hug, you are helping to fight those germs that attack my very being: the sense that I'm not worth anything, that no one will care.

A handshake, a gentle touch, a caring smile are all signs of acceptance for me and help me to bear the pain.

We've all felt pain. We all know trauma. My trauma wasn't worse than yours in terms of the emotions we feel or deny — but it may have begun at an earlier age, it may have been more frequent, longer in duration, or more violent.

I don't always understand what's going on inside. But I want to understand and accept all parts of me. And for those of you who want to, I wish for you to understand and accept multiplicity, too.

Please don't victimize me again and make this one more secret that I have to keep. I think it bears repeating: my alters are not here to hurt YOU, but to protect ME.

Give us a chance. Let our wounds heal from within so that we may accept and help others through our journey.

Don't be afraid of me. I have needs. I have feelings. If you don't always understand me, just accept me, care for me. Love me in your own way.

— By Rita C.

Note to clients: *The following column is not intended to suggest that every survivor with MPD has a history of ritual abuse. Dr. Young suggests that those who feel uncomfortable about this subject should NOT read it now, but save it for a safer time or place. We thank Dr. Young for sharing his views of this difficult issue. It is important for all of us, regardless of the type of trauma we have suffered, to know that with persistence we can find healing and peace within. —LW*

Therapists' Page

By Walter C. Young, M.D.

Charter member of Columbine Psychiatric Center's Medical Staff, Littleton, CO. Founder, clinical director of Columbine Center for the Treatment of Dissociative Disorders. Executive member and fellow of the International Society for the Study of Multiple Personality and Dissociation.

I'd like to direct this column not only to survivors of ritual abuse who are struggling for their very existence, but also to therapists who are increasingly encountering survivors of such abuse. You are not alone.

Ritual abuse is a systematic effort by members of deviant religious cults and other groups to first paralyze and then control the minds of young children or recruits. Some cults are loosely organized, but others are highly organized generational cults, usually reported as Satanic.

There are compelling reasons to believe that these cults exist. There are many adult survivors who have healed and now speak openly about their experiences without shame or guilt. They stand as heroes and heroines to those still struggling in their own efforts to survive. There are police records of investigations to substantiate these reports. Also, the reports of children in day care centers who have been victimized at the hands of cult members, validate the claims of therapists around the country.

These therapists are frequently encountering memories that include physical and sexual abuse, torture, killing, and other perverse activities that need not be spelled out in detail. Victims of ritual abuse have been indoctrinated to maintain complete secrecy for fear of their own life or the life of a loved one. At times they may be programmed to return to cult activity at a later time in their life. All of these concerns need to be understood during the course of treatment, so that the various cues and programs instituted by cults can be recognized and mastered to permit your own personal growth and freedom.

It is important to see that the emotional consequences of cult abuse reflect victimization. Survivors may face survivor guilt, chronic depression and suicidal tendencies, internal attacks by persecutory alters, and persistent allegiance by some alters to cult programs and indoctrinations.

During the course of your treatment, don't decide prematurely about these issues until you can see the brutal context in which a young child had to make decisions with no help. Most survivors fought back. I usually find alters who purposely attempted to ruin ceremonies in some internal fashion, who maintain efforts to disbelieve what they were taught, or who internalized and preserved victims of ceremonies inside themselves in special ways, to keep the spirits of those who were killed from being delivered to "Satan".

In the course of treatment you will find these aspects of yourself. They will reaffirm that you are a good person who fought in the only way a child could fight back, under such intimidating circumstances.

Sometimes you may feel you need to make atonement or forgive yourself for secrets and behaviors which were forced upon you by others. In time you will understand what kind of forgiveness is necessary. Remember that you were a victim and that you are maintaining secrets that belong to someone else.

Throughout treatment, it is important that you do not actively participate in a cult. If cult activity continues, it is highly unlikely that you will be able to give up the dissociative defenses that were needed to survive your initial cult experience.

Crisis periods are not unusual, and periods of hospitalization may be necessary. At these times it's important to have someone you can call, or a safe place where you can go when you feel in danger.

If memories or flashbacks of these kinds of activities begin to occur, explore them slowly but don't feel that you're crazy. Your adaptation to them was a survival mechanism in a crazy world. It will take time to understand the context in which these activities occurred and the extent of your own victimization.

Frequently survivors of cult activities were forced to participate in cult ceremonies. This resulted in a great deal of behavior that most of us would find unacceptable. It is not unusual for the survivor to judge him or herself harshly, and to feel undeserving of treatment or even of going on with life.

Often survivors feel suicidal and experience what we call "survivor guilt", where one feels one is not entitled to survive if others in cult ceremonies did not. It is only after treatment is well underway that one can have a larger perspective on the victimization by cults, and master the events that happened.

Fearful persecutory alters may appear who are identified with cults. They are the outgrowth of

(continued on page 5)

(Therapists' Page *cont'd*)

last-ditch efforts to survive and to avoid the persistent pain and indoctrination that was a part of cult life. They do not reflect the true spiritual dimensions of the individual involved.

Despite systematic efforts to destroy one's sense of spirituality and goodness as a human being, most survivors will find that, internally, they opposed cult activity and found internal ways of trying to resist, when there were no adult figures to whom they could turn for help.

This is true despite the fact that some alters may consider themselves extensions of the cult. I believe that these cult identifications reflect the survivors' need to have internal alters who experience themselves as equal in strength to the cult members who were endangering and controlling them during cult activity. These alters may continue to persecute internally to maintain the secrecy believed necessary for survival.

Remember, however, that most of the danger during treatment is internal. The cults taught you through intimidation. I suggest that you decide what you want to stand for in this world, and reject the passive stance of compliance that you were forced to accept as a child. Find a reason to survive. Every cult victim who survives is one more defeat of cult indoctrination. In addition, adult survivors can often speak in their own behalf, and help therapists learn more effective techniques to help others.

It is also important for survivors to carefully select a therapist who will be empathic in accepting the material they present, without being judgemental. You may need more than one resource person. While you may feel in a chronic state of crisis, remember that your therapist may be hearing this material for the first time, and may at times need moral support from you as well. Treatment of ritual abuse is a team effort amongst people who are finding their way in often-uncharted territory.

In the long run, stand up for yourself as a human being who has been victimized, but who will no longer settle for anything less than a full life equal to anyone else in the world.

Seek and find your own spirituality. This cannot be taken from you, and was not robbed by your ritual abusers despite their efforts at convincing you otherwise. You are *not* evil. You are *not* bad. You are victims who are entitled to survive and go on to find a life that has meaning and importance to you and those around you.

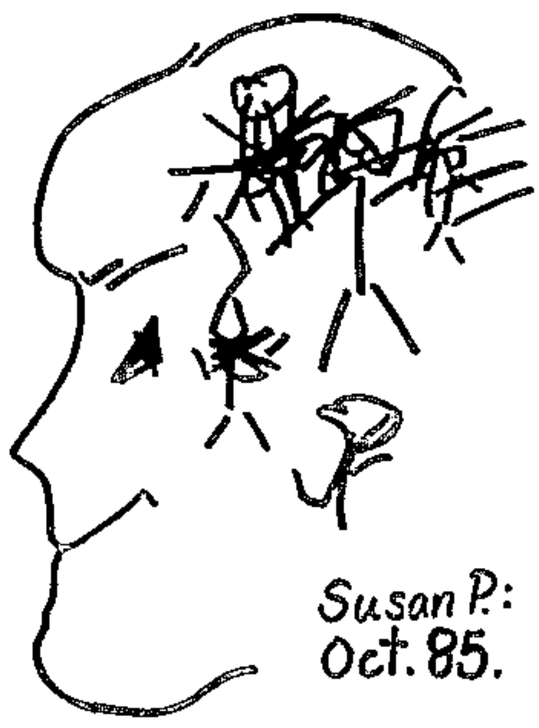
Find people who understand love and can give and accept it. Believe in yourself as a human being, and find those elements in your own life that affirm you as a person worthy of treatment and a successful outcome. Maintain your hope despite the difficulties that treatment encounters.

Finally, remember that you are a product of more than your own memories. Too often we judge ourselves prematurely. We tend to recognize only the bad memories that have come out during the course of treatment. We forget that there are a great many good, strong, positive, powerful qualities that are a part of our current life and can continue in the future.

We are not just a stack of bad mail. While memories may frequently be awful, we need to emphasize what we stand for, and those things which are positive within us.

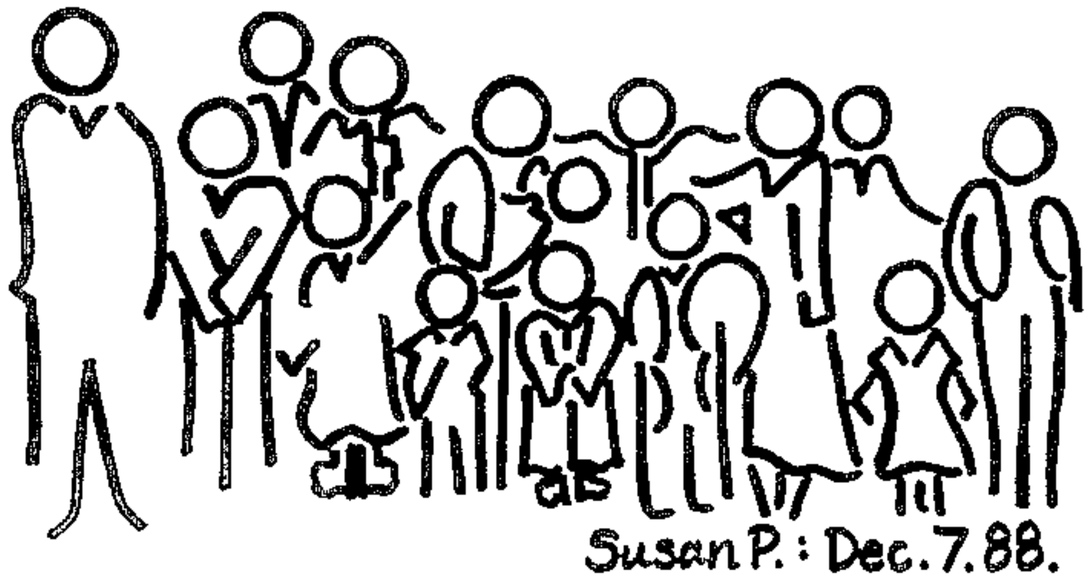
For those of you who are survivors, hang in there. Don't lose hope. Surround yourself with a healing environment, and you *can* get well! **MV**

REMINDER: IF YOU MOVE, TELL US. THE POST OFFICE DOES NOT FORWARD *MANY VOICES*!



Susan P.: Oct. 85.

Susan P.: May 2. 88.



Susan P.: Dec. 7. 88.

Drawings from 1985 & 1988 which illustrate my increasing communication within the self.
-Susan P.: Mar. 22, 89

The Circle

By Jessica 7/87

The Women
Sit in a circle
Stories rise up from their souls,
And exit their mouths.
Stories of hope and horror.
Stories before unrevealed,
Even to themselves.

The women
Are of many ages,
Races, religions, sizes and shapes.
But all are alike,
In at least one way.
Each one has a story
Of childhood trust abused.

The women
Sit in a circle.
Stories rise up from their souls,
And fall upon ears
Opened to hear them.
Stories before unheard,
Because no one would listen.

The women
Open their hears
To all in the circle of shame.
But shame which is shared
Is shame no more.
Turns to love and acceptance
And pride.

The women
Sit in a circle.
Stories rise up from their souls,
And shatter the room
With their power.
Emotions so strong
No longer contained.

The women
Share in the stories
Of all who sit in the circle.
Each story is different.
Yet each is the same.
A child betrayed,
An adult in pain.

The women
Sit in a circle.
Stories rise up from their souls,
No longer alone,
They gain strength from each other.
The story of each
Becomes that of another.

The women
Tell what they remember
Of lives filled with sorrow and pain.
But also of joy,
Laughter and healing.
Of love made stronger
By the sharing of tears.

The women
Sit in a circle
Stories rise up from their souls,
Gather strength from each other
And burst upon the world.
No longer silent,
No longer alone.

Note: The following goals are used in a 12-step Incest Survivors (S/A) meeting for multiples in New York City, reprinted with permission.

Twelve Goals for Multiple Personalities

©1988 by Giboney, The Professor, Laura

1. To know that we were powerless over the abuse which created our multiplicity.
2. To realize that multiple consciousness was the best possible defense we could create against abuse — that it was a heathy response to a sick situation.
3. To acknowledge and discover our personalities.
4. To accept our personalities as part of ourselves, whether good or bad.
5. To understand and work with our personalities instead of fighting with them.
6. To stop abusing our personalities.
7. To contract with our personalities not to abuse us, themselves, or others.
8. To find alternatives to denying, suppressing, or banishing our personalities.
9. To encourage communication, cooperation, and assistance among our personalities.
10. To encourage our personalities to change, grow, and come into the present, rather than have them continue behaving in ways inappropriate to current situations.
11. To stop creating new personalities.
12. To help stop the cycle of abuse.

Breaking the Cycle of Abuse

1. We stop the abuse which happens to us.
2. We stop abusing others.
3. We stop abusing ourselves.
4. We stop the effects abuse had on us.
5. We stop outside abuse.

Recovering

By Rita M.

Q: Does this ever end?

Often, therapy does feel like it will never end. Therapy is hard work and no one should ever think that therapy is easy. The therapeutic process is one that spends much time unravelling a tangled web of mystery and repairing the damage.

It's fairly safe to say that abuse that covered an extended period of time and included many perpetrators will require a longer course of therapy. For most MPD clients, be prepared to invest 5-7 years in the process of recovery, once the correct diagnosis is made. Some of you may have had much therapy prior to being diagnosed as having MPD, but previous therapy without the correct diagnosis does not necessarily shorten the time needed to do the work of recovery.

Therapy tends to have stages:

1. The initial stage, when MPD may or may not be suspected, where the client presents with various issues — perhaps problems in relationships, depression, etc.

2. The discovery stage, which is after the diagnosis is made, and the search begins for traumatic memories.

3. The "post-integration" stage, or the time when most, if not all, memories have been recovered and worked through, and adjustment to a new sense of self begins.

This does not necessarily mean that the system becomes whole, as some MPD clients don't integrate in that sense. Specifically, here I refer to the *healthy* balance achieved by the system, whatever form it takes. Not all multiples "integrate" and become whole. That is their choice, and that choice is *okay*, as long as the system can function *effectively* and *peacefully* as a unit.

While MPD clients are often frustrated with the amount of time needed to recover, it is *needed*. Frequently, so much has happened to the MPD client that remembering so much in a short time can overwhelm the client and actually be harmful (i.e., trigger suicidal behavior or a flight from therapy.)

This does not mean that the client doesn't experience gains throughout the process of therapy and begins to feel better. The recognition of work done, of peace achieved, is very important on a week-by-week basis. Regressions will occur — especially after major work is completed and a sense of stability is achieved — when new material begins to surface. But this is temporary. The client who stays committed to the process of therapy will continue to move forward and upward to a higher level of functioning and peace, internally and externally.

The key word here is *commitment*. That means keeping therapy appointments, doing assignments, and generally accepting responsibility for your own recovery.

Anger toward abusers is common, expected, and part of the healing process. However, a word of warning: Abusers are not going to say they are sorry. They are not going to pay for therapy.

Excessive anger at the abusers blocks the client from doing his/her work. Life is not fair, that's true. If it were, none of us would have been abused. However, don't let the anger take over and keep you from recovery. The pain at the bottom of the anger is what must be addressed.

Ultimately, we cannot change what happened in the past. No matter how much therapy we get, no matter how much work we do in resolving those painful memories. . . the fact that we were abused is never going to change.

It's what we choose to do about that abuse that makes a difference. In my own case, the real turning point for me whas waking up one day and not seeing myself as the victim. The abuse was something that happened, period. It didn't define who I was as a person, and it wasn't something that crowded my mind, demanding to be thought about. I still had a lot of work to do, but I was a human being. I could finally say "It doesn't really matter any more," and it didn't.

Then I was ready to begin the real grief work, because I had gotten past the anger at all those terrible people who hurt me. I had let go. Not forgiven, or forgotten, but let go. There's a difference. It means recognizing that I couldn't change the past. I could only take control of my life back from them, and heal myself. **MV**

Rita M. is a Licensed Independent Social Worker and Certified Alcoholism Counselor (LISW,CAC), and is also a recovering MPD client. She functions at a very high level (after much therapy) and is "integrated". MANY VOICES is pleased to have her help us provide the special viewpoint of a recovering, knowledgeable, MPD client/therapist. Readers may send questions to Rita, C/O MANY VOICES. We'll use as many as possible. -LW

Don't Forget To Sightsee Along The Way

By Gabrielle

When I first entered therapy with my present therapist, she told me I would need certain equipment to accompany me on this journey of healing. She encouraged me to buy a hot water bottle and a blanket that would belong only to me to wrap in, for when I would need to feel safe. Although at the time, I was convinced it was she who was on the "farside", there was an unexplainable, sobering reality that she was correct in her wisdom, and so I embarked on my search for the necessary tools for our trip ahead. As I sifted through piles of blanket sleeper material looking for what would become my "safe blanket of comfort," I made a decision that since I was going to undertake this adventure I would be sure to stop and sightsee along the way. I knew it would be important for me to carefully collect mementos to treasure, and the purchase of a pink and white checkered blanket was my starting point.

As I began to learn about my significant others, I embraced many positive experiences with them in the healing process. We collected valuable stones at the park which now hold precious memories of sunny picnics and hikes on unfamiliar trails. As the seasons changed my children delighted in the fall leaves, and we used our creativity in making leaf arrangements and preserved our memories by pressing leaves within book pages. One of my alters had a natural gift of sketching and she lovingly provided pictures of our outings for future preservation. While she sketched, I explored the library shelves on art and began taking in exhibits with a new appreciation of the talent within myself and other artists. I began to look forward to the day of integration when I, too, would possess the talent I so deeply admired in her.

During the healing process of the child who held the gift of poetry, we created an anthology of her work and took in the sights of the famous poets, while wrapped in our blanket, on crisp fall nights. I wasn't aware then that I was laying a valuable foundation for myself when my own work would one day be published. We experienced many adventures on our excursions looking for the right stuffed animal or doll that would become each child's comfort. I now look upon those toys with many wonderful memories and they are valuable treasures from past days of healing.

I started a book of firsts where I kept a log of how we experienced our first tastes of life. I carefully recorded our first experiences of flying a kite, new traditions for our holidays, our integrations, our first tastes of dreams come true, along with a host of other new experiences. Little did I know what a positive tool it would become to combat depression and suicidal inclinations, and virtually be our book of life through the turbulent storms of therapy.

Currently, I'm in search of a chest in which we can store our priceless jewels. I'm enjoying the sights of previously unexplored antique shops and country stores. As a result, my alters not only bring back new creative ideas from these excursions, but involve me in new learning experiences of their creativity. If we are unable to locate a chest in a store, we may embark on new horizons and make our own treasure chest. Who knows what fresh frontiers will break before us in our quest ahead!

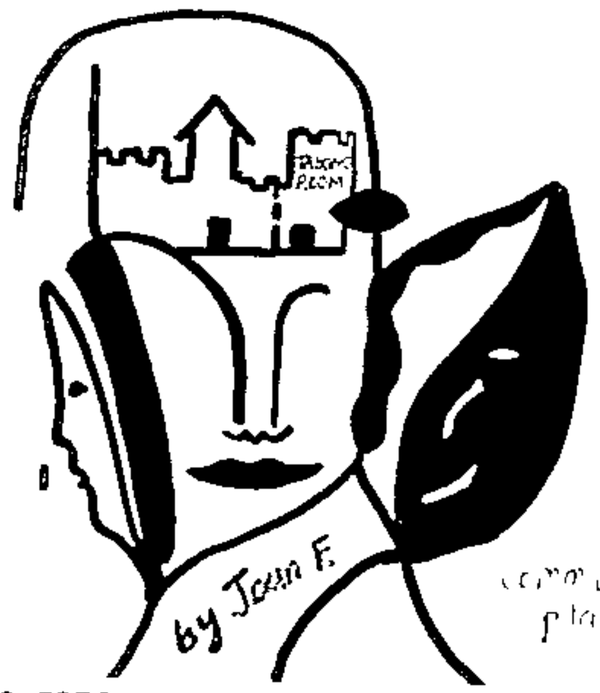
Along with high intelligence, multiplicity generates multiple talents in which creativity can be transformed into a positive channel of healing. It is a challenge for each of us to explore the frontiers where our abilities lie, and develop them to their fullest potential. Our perpetrators brainwashed us to believe that we are the useless scum of the world, but in truth, it is us, the fragmented, who hold the jewels of great price in our goodness, our intelligence, and our talents. Each one of us has the capacity to make our sphere a richer, safer place and give invaluable contributions to the world around us. As healing unfolds and potential is developed, don't forget to sightsee and smell the flowers along the way!

Support for clients' "loved ones"

Andy A. writes that, as the "admiring spouse" of a wonderful lady in MPD therapy, he has begun meeting with other spouses for mutual support. "We charge no dues or fees, and respect each others' confidentiality," he says. "I have even developed the idea that dissociation is a gift from a loving Higher Power. Some of my friends have the same view. We'd like to hear from other groups like ours, or individuals who would like to start a group. Two of us would especially like to hear from folks whose loved ones are satanic cult survivors."

Interested persons may write to Andy A. on these subjects, c/o MANY VOICES, P.O. Box 2639, Cincinnati, OH 45201-2639. We will forward your letters and comments. Please note if we may share your thoughts with MV readers. —LW

Sheryl & the Gang *have struggled with accepting the diagnosis of MPD. They write: "Five years ago I thought I had monsters living inside me, and I dreaded finding out that I in any way resembled the true monster in my life, my father. Now I am able to tell myself, almost daily, that I am MPD and for today, that's OK. I have discovered that my "monsters" are actually precious parts of me, all of which deserve respect and love. I was and am not a 'crazy' person trying in vain to live in a healthy world. I was a healthy, courageous little girl surviving in a crazy situation. I wrote the enclosed poem one night when I was trying to describe MPD to those who have never spent time in their live with someone else controlling their body. I was trying to describe how we were able to accomplish this complex task for survival. I also wrote the poem so that I may always remember that we are not 'monsters' that need to remain hidden, but truly 'Hidden Treasures.'"*



Hidden Treasures

Have you heard —
there's a thief terrorizing your neighborhood.
You take your valuables
your jewels and monies and
everything else precious to you
and hide them.
You put some in safe deposit boxes
some under the bed,
or way back in the drawer of sweaters you never wear
maybe even in the cookie jar.
As the days turn to weeks
and the weeks into months
the terror and panic subside
but you have somehow forgotten
about your hidden treasures.
You have become accustomed
to not having them a part of your daily life.
I, too, lived in fear of a thief —
stalking about my life.
So, like you,
I hid my precious jewels.
He was not threatening to steal diamonds
but other aspects much more valuable.
I had to hide my child,
my innocence,
my trust,
my vulnerability.
He threatened to steal all of my emotional being,
so I had to hide my anger,
my pain,
my laughter,
my joy.
once the threat was gone
I had forgotten about my hidden jewels
I learned to live without them.
Then,
one day —
digging way back in the back of that drawer of sweaters,
I found a box.
Piece by piece I have stumbled upon
some of what I put away for safe keeping.
Like you, at first,
I was surprised that I could have forgotten
hiding some things so precious.
I held them at arms length,
admiring their beauty,
not knowing how to incorporate them
into a life I had built without them.
Just as you slowly put on that diamond necklace,
I "try on" my different parts.
And, like you,
such experimentation feels familiar,
yet uncomfortable.
I take her off again,
putting her back in her "safe place".
With practice,
each of them will again
become an integral part of my day-to-day existence.
It's exciting, new and scary.
I wonder what else I have saved
that still remains
"safely" hidden.

By Sheryl & the Gang

Letter from an MP's friend

Living with a person who happens to be a multiple personality is never easy. I never know who is going to come home or wake up or pop out. I can be talking with one part and a switch occurs, and this part gets upset with me about what we were discussing. Confused? So am I. Sometimes I get calls and the voice on the line says "Hi" and then proceeds to tell me that she/he is lost. That's real tough because I am bad with directions. Or I'll be in the kitchen and a voice calls out "Hey You!" I go into my friend's bedroom and a part says to me, "I'm ready to go home now."

I don't know what to say: "You ARE home, you're in your bedroom," or "It's too late to take you home", or "You're spending the night here and I'll take you home in the morning"?

Then there is Raymond. He is an angry little boy. He's never hit me, but he has come close. I have had things thrown at me. Mostly he just yells and swears at me. When he seems out of control, I call for the Center to come out. The Center is a mystical being that helps him/her to gain control and come back to 1989 and her Waking Self.

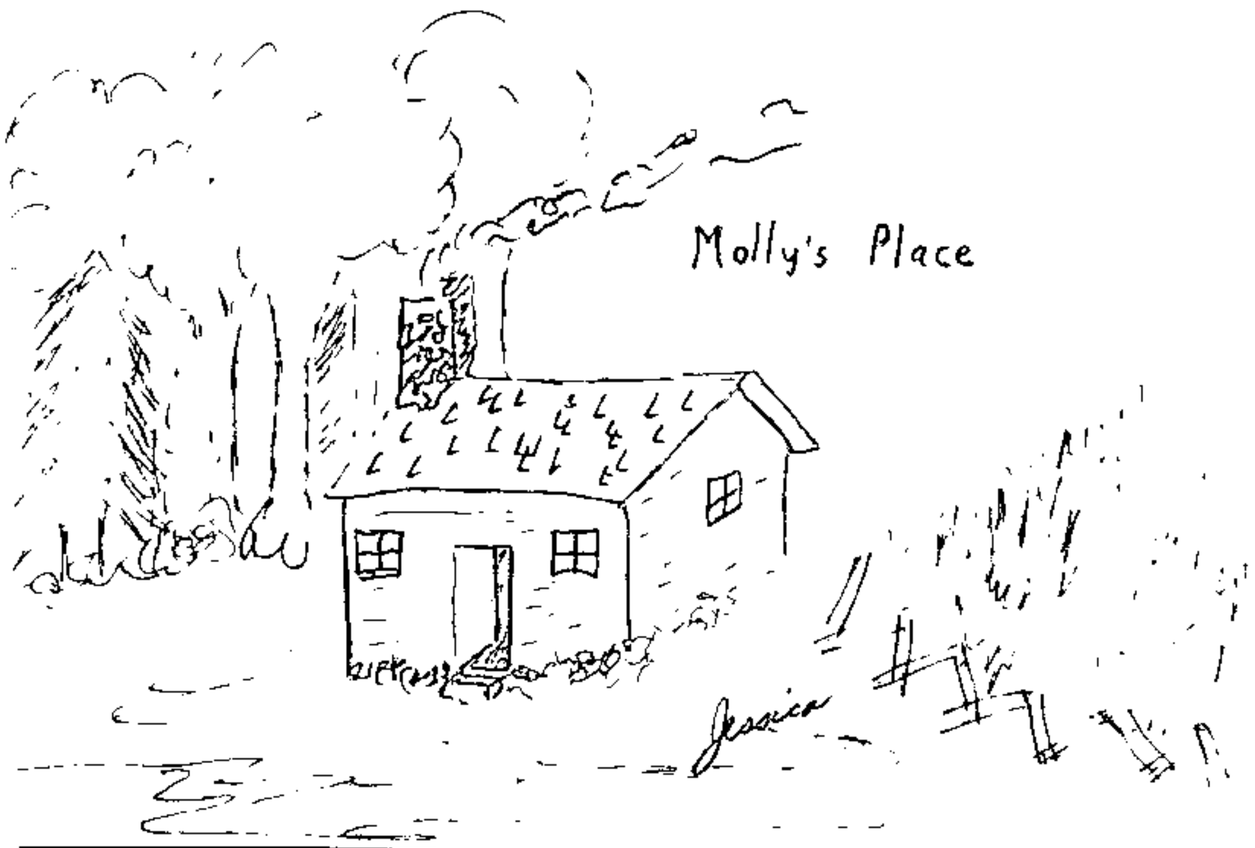
Another part is Nancy Lee. She is a fun-loving little girl. She likes ducks, storybooks, and blowing bubbles. When we go to the grocery store she pops out and wants me to buy her treats and a storybook. One day I came home from work and found her sitting on the outside steps. She wanted me to take her to McDonald's. She had less than 50 cents, but thought she had enough money, because in the late 1950's or 1960's, she would have had enough. I ended up treating her!

We have found that grocery shopping inevitably causes the others to pop out. Getting ready for parties and company also seems to be a time when the parts are apt to come out. Christmas and birthdays are always fun for both of us. I enjoy buying presents for the various parts, and the aprts sometimes buy me presents.

Sometimes I wish there was a newsletter for me

—Karen P.

Thank you Karen. If there's enough interest from friends and relatives of people with MPD and dissociative disorders, we will begin a Companion newsletter just for them. Let us know! —LW



Molly's Place

By Jessica Turner*

Molly's house and the woods around it are inside my head at was the only place I've ever known safety.

Molly used to live there. She was a 23-year-old Quaker. Her house was outside Boston in colonial America. When she came into being, we had no idea that there were no Quakers in colonial America, but the anachronism never bothered Molly. We were probably about four when Molly came into being, and her home was a refuge for all our children under six.

(We had a major break in our internal community at six years old, so those over six created different refuges.)

During therapy, we found Molly and her little cottage, and those little ones who were overwhelmed often sought refuge there, as they had decades ago. She cared for them as she had when we were little, giving as much comfort and shelter as we were capable of imagining.

Things got better and we started integrating, a wonderful process of reuniting with loved ones. Molly and those little ones whom she had sheltered joyfully became part of that.

I, Jessica, didn't think much about Molly's place until something happened in the outside world or in therapy, and during a therapy session, when my feelings were at their most raw, I fled inside the mind as I always had. I found myself at a familiar little cottage. Molly doesn't live there anymore, but it was still there.

It has become very real and solid-seeming over the years, with many details that stay put. I go there when I need to get some distance — usually from whatever my therapist is talking about. When there are no other alters to take over, the body is abandoned when I go to Molly's place. The body has stayed immobile for up to half an hour while I puttered around Molly's place, until my therapist (whom I heard as a voice at a controllable difference) backed off from what she was saying and coaxed me out.

This probably serves the same purpose as a normal dissociator's 'going numb,' but with the drawback that it can't be used in public because I look catatonic.

Over the years since the major integrations, we have uncovered a few more alters, struggling with very difficult material. Sometimes these have gone to Molly's place to stay, though it is never as much home to them as it is to me, because Molly and the little ones who went there are part of me.

We can talk there, a little. With the most recently-discovered alters, it is the only communication we have, except for our therapist.

I'm glad I have Molly's place. I don't see any reason why it shouldn't stay there always, just like normal people can take refuge in memories of a safe childhood home and loving (not to say perfect) parents. MV

(Jessica Turner is a pseudonym)

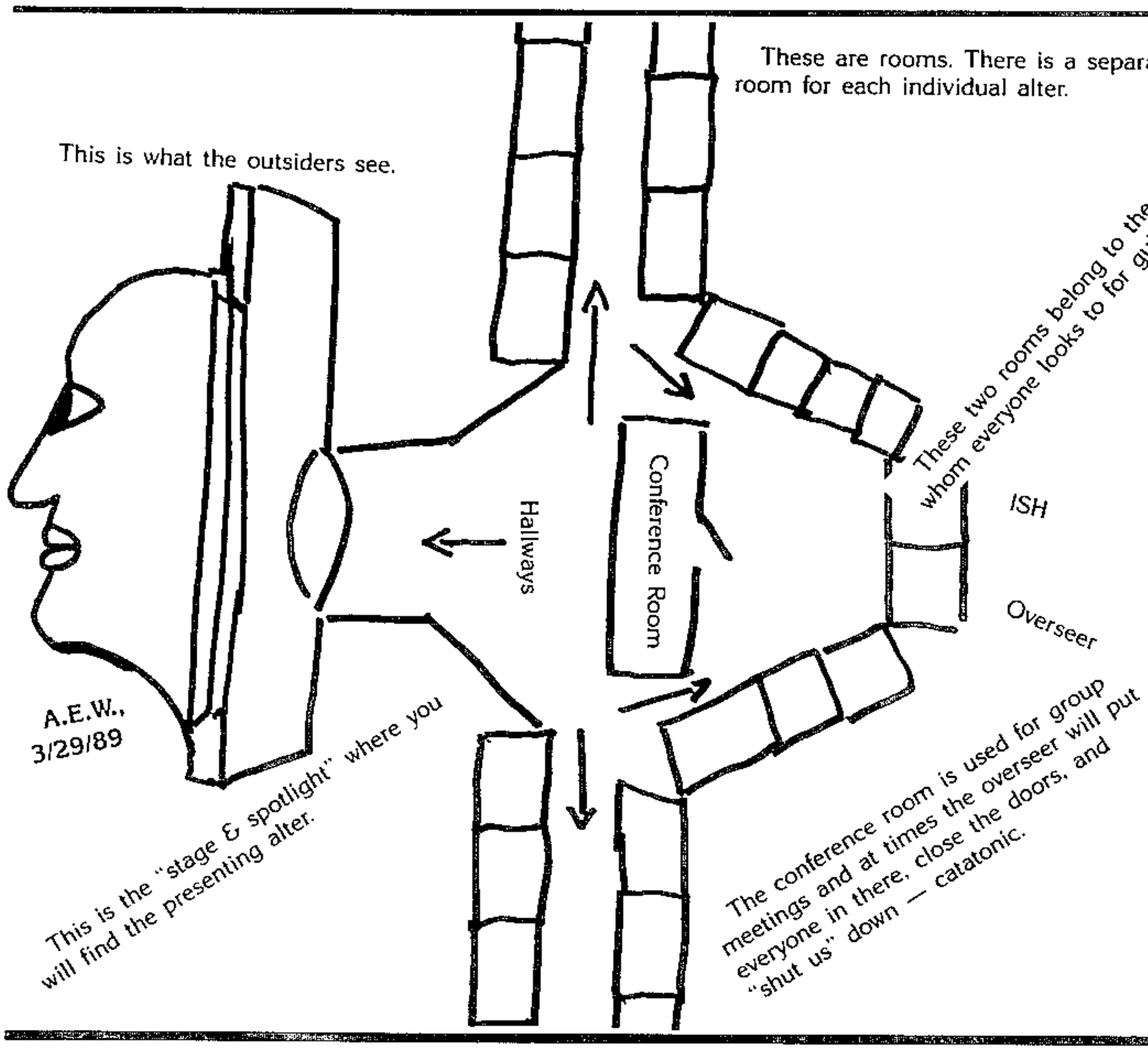
My Book

By Toni R.

MY BOOK is our special communication place. It is the sharing place of our inner family. Nights are my hardest times of the day. Several nights a week, before the difficult bedtime hour, I, Toni, open MY BOOK and find the section entitled "SHARING PLACE."

I start to write first, spontaneously, about anything that comes to mind — feelings, thoughts, events of the day. I just write and write without worrying about punctuation, spelling, and all that stuff. Then I talk "inside" (like a loud speaker in a big house,) and ask if anyone wants to write anything. They know they can write to share with others, or they can write just for themselves as a creative opportunity. I also have drawing paper with colors close by for anyone who would rather color or draw or do a collage. I also keep a thesaurus for anyone who likes to write poetry.

It's so *special*! It is special because it is, for sure, one *safe* place for all of us to just BE — just BE ourselves — to share, to be creative, to know each other better. As I write this right now, I am crying, because with sometimes chaotic inner *and* outside worlds, MY BOOK is *one safe place.*


This is what the outsiders see.
These are rooms. There is a separate room for each individual alter.
These two rooms belong to the ones whom everyone looks to for guidance.
ISH
Overseer
Hallways
Conference Room
A.E.W.,
3/29/89
This is the "stage & spotlight" where you will find the presenting alter.
The conference room is used for group meetings and at times the overseer will put everyone in there, close the doors, and "shut us" down — catatonic.

Fear
By Sasha

Fear is the stuff
I eat for breakfast
thinly sliced
I place it between bread & lettuce
for lunch
it is the snack
I carry in my back pocket
the theme of nightmares
& poems scribbled in the dark

Fear is the oil
shining up therapy
burning in my tears
fermenting in my stomach
& carrying me into the bathroom
where I hide against fluffy towels
& torturous memories
memories
that are not biodegradable
& cannot be flushed

I am allergic to fear
it makes me break out
in people . . .

Books

Treatment of Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse
© 1988 by Eliana Gil, Ph.D., 301 pages. Published by Launch Press, Walnut Creek, CA 94598. $16.95 Paperback.

Dr. Gil has written a very thorough guide for therapists who treat adults abused as children. As a client, I found her book enlightening and readable. Its exhaustive list of 'indicators' of abuse reassured me that I had not invented my memories, and that I was not the only one who behaved in self-defeating ways.

Gil's discussion of abreaction, or 'reliving' traumatic memories in a therapeutic setting was also useful to me. She gives a better explanation of what 'working through' really means than I've read elsewhere. She also mentions that for some people, full-blown abreactions may not be necessary or desireable. That was a personal comfort, since I can't seem to abreact. There's so much useful information in this book that I find it quite hard to condense. Why don't you just *read* it!

Sandplay
A Psychotherapuetic Approach to the Psyche
© 1980 By Dora M. Kalff. 166 pages. Sigo Press, Boston, MA.

Images of the Self
The Sandplay Therapy Process
© 1983 By Estell Weinrib. 172 Pages. Sigo Press, Boston, MA.

I bought both of these paperbacks in a used book store. The Sigo Press no longer is listed in Boston, so you may have to do some digging to track them down. Both books deal with the therapeutic use of sandtrays to identify unconscious feelings, especially in children. A sandtray is essentially what you'd think: a shallow box of sand, accompanied by a wide selection of miniature people, houses, vehicles, trees, war weapons, etc. The theory is that, unlike cats (who use sand to *bury* shit,) the kids expose all sorts of inner thoughts and feelings by arranging the small figures in the sand and explaining the scene to the therapist, who interprets its psychological meaning.

In addition to providing therapeutic insight into the child- and/or nonverbal parts of dissociative clients, I'd guess that 'working' with a sandtray could be great fun for client and therapist alike.

Sigo Press, (if it still exists,) specialized in books based on the principles put forth by Swiss psycholanalyst C.J. Jung. As a client who is certainly no Jungian expert, I found some of the interpretations offered by the writers to be a bit far-fetched. But I'm also aware that many people enjoy and may benefit from such interpretations. So if this is your bag, head for the nearest used book store and give sandtrays a try. — LW

The Sword and the Sorcerer

By S.B.M.

My therapy is like fencing:
He thrusts; I sidestep.
His voice invites confidences,
My mind races ahead,
Eluding.

Full House
By S.B.M.

There's a little girl who lives in
me;
I see her peeping from my face.
The doctor lets me take her out,
But keep her in her place.

Dandelions
By Jeff M.

Dandelion, dandelion
You are my favorite flower
You bloom every spring
and make me laugh
People may hate us
People may do terrible things to
us
But each spring you come back
with your beautiful golden smile
Dandelion, dandelion
You are my very favorite flower.

Diagnosis
By Sasha

He says I have
more than one personality
an expanded
person
small enough to be a tear
big enough to be a rainbow
bouncing against a mirror

multiple
he says
multiple choice
multiplication
multitude
I was never very good
in a crowd

Still there is
that tiny thread of hope
that light-beam
that shines through my tears
casting my colors
against a hopeful sky
so that I can see them

August 1989
What was the bravest thing that you've done so far, in therapy or daily life? Tell us how you found the courage to do it. ART: Draw the strongest part of you and (if you wish) name it. DEADLINE for submissions: June 1, 1989.

October 1989
What do you do if a child part comes out inappropriately, on the job or in a public place? Are there ways to sense that he/she is coming to take control? How do you comfort your "children"? ART: Draw the child part(s) of you and their favorite things. DEADLINE for submissions, August 1, 1989.

December 1989
What meditative or relaxation methods work best for you? How often do you use them? ART: Draw what you see when you meditate. DEADLINE for submissions: October 1, 1989.

Share with us!

Prose, poetry, and art are accepted on upcoming issue themes, (and even on NON-themes, if it's really great.) DO send humor, cartoons, good ideas, and whatever is useful to you. Please limit prose to about 4 typed double-spaced pages. Line drawings (black on white) are best. We can't possibly print everything. Some pieces will be condensed, but we'll print as much as we can. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return of your originals and a note giving us permission to publish and/or edit or excerpt your work.

Subscriptions for a year (six issues) of *MANY VOICES* are $30 in the U.S., $36 elsewhere. Please enclose the form below (or a copy) with your check, and mail to *MANY VOICES*, P.O. Box 2639, Cincinnati, OH 45201-2639.

MANY VOICES

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Please check one:

☐ I am a client ☐ Professional/therapist ☐ Relative/friend

To receive ALL 1989 issues, Check here to start subscription with Feb '89 : ☐.

Make check payable and send with this form to *MANY VOICES*
P.O. Box 2639, Cincinnati, OH 45201-2639.